

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

July 11, 2006

6:15 PM

Chairman Garrity called the meeting to order.

The Clerk calls the roll.

Present: Aldermen Garrity, O'Neil, Osborne, Gatsas, Duval

Chairman Garrity addressed Item 3:

3. Communication from Kevin Sheppard, Deputy Public Works Director, seeking approval for the allocation of FY07 MER funds as recommended in the enclosed.

Alderman O'Neil asked Mr. Sheppard if there is a way that we can, one of the things that we have talked about and I don't think we have adopted yet, is Central Purchasing and Fleet Management, but is there a way we can do some efficiencies instead of departments doing their own thing in a purchase, an example if two or three departments are buying pick up trucks that we go out for once during the season for pick up trucks.

Mr. Sheppard commented we try to work with departments, actually, it's more toward one of our staff works with the program but it is actually our garage superintendent that works with the other departments to purchase vehicles. One of the issues the needs for each individual truck even though they are the same truck are different for each department, but we don't always necessarily buy, a lot of times we write a spec and go out to bid versus going off the state. As far as working together with other departments we have always worked well with the other departments to ensure they get what they need.

Alderman O'Neil if we look at the Police, it's usually a police package vehicle, correct, then we go down to the two Highway vehicles those are dump trucks I believe. Then we go down to one vehicle with Building, two with Fire, and four at

Parks & Recreation. I'm just guessing I think the Fire department is support vehicles, don't know if they are cars or vans, it looks like they are replacing cars. I'm just wondering could the Building and two Fire go out at the same time. Should the four Parks go out at the same time.

Mr. Sheppard responded I know Fire likes certain types of things on their vehicles but we can work with them on that.

Alderman O'Neil stated I just think that is a direction we should be going, I am not in favor of fleet management but I think we need to get some efficiencies in purchasing and I know in the past departments have had their own time lines, and we really, there may be a way if we package deals to get better prices, maybe we package passenger cars with a pick up truck bid and put it out and see how it comes back.

Mr. Sheppard responded what we done before if we've got a group and we bid them out individually then we ask for a package number, any discount if it is awarded as a package.

Alderman O'Neil asked if that included local dealers as well.

Mr. Sheppard responded it was advertised in the paper.

Alderman O'Neil moved to approve the request. Alderman Duval duly seconded the motion. The motion carried with none recorded in opposition.

4. Petition for discontinuance of a portion of So. Bedford Street.

Paul Borek, Economic Development Director, made a presentation to the Committee stating this is to request the discontinuance of Bedford Street south of Depot, basically that portion of Bedford Street runs from Depot adjacent to WMUR, to approximately the body shop, Auto City and a portion of Bedford Street that was exchanged with Auto City for some property as part of the ballpark project. What remains of Bedford street dead ends here at this barrier. There presently are parking meters parallel parking meters on the street at this time, but last year when Robert O'Sullivan was looking to develop the restaurant as part of the retail component of the riverfront project they ran into difficulty because they were unable to identify some dedicated parking in the vicinity of the restaurant adjacent to the ballpark. We looked at a variety of different solutions including the parking deck and other locations in the vicinity and we did find that this stretch of Bedford Street didn't go anywhere and could accommodate more vehicles since

two through traffic lanes weren't necessary. The Highway Department helped us by preparing a drawing that basically identified that angled parking could accommodate 36 to 38 vehicles with a single drive lane and if it were operated by a valet service they could make it work with a drive lane and carefully moving cars in and out. I met with Tom Bartlett and WMUR and if an easement were maintained so that when necessary they could access this back parking lot which they don't use very often, that would be fine with them, in fact Mr. Bartlett liked the idea, he wouldn't mind providing valet parking and work an agreement with a nearby restaurant on their lower lot along Granite Street, so they were fine with this concept and this idea. So the purpose today is to request discontinuance, I believe Highway Department is here but their concern was maintaining the sidewalk easement and structure at this location which connects with the body shop and WMUR. If this discontinuance were allowed it would enable the City to better utilizing this piece of real estate by leasing to a valet parking operator, restaurant providing valet service and that would come before the Board at a later date to be negotiated and discussed, but at this point we wanted to move forward the request for discontinuance.

Alderman Gatsas asked what the 36, or the discontinuance and the 36 spaces worth.

Mr. Borek said I'm sorry.

Alderman Gatsas said the discontinuance of the street, and the 36 spaces that's been allocated.

Mr. Borek stated this was a concept for providing a larger number of spaces than the parallel parking currently provided. Highway just laid out about how many spaces could be accommodated, I think the restaurant developer needed 50 to 75 this provides 36 to 38 but we did talk with our financial institution and something is better than nothing and if they could move toward possibly having spaces like this it would help them with financing.

Alderman Gatsas stated maybe my clarity of the question wasn't good. What is that lease worth.

Mr. Borek responded I don't know, we have not valued the lease yet, conducted those negotiations.

Alderman Gatsas stated why are you coming to us with this proposal, you are looking for us to approve something that we don't know what the value is.

Mr. Borek stated I think we would come to you with a valuation at a later date when we would propose a potential lease, proposal or policy, this is simply for the discontinuance of the street.

Alderman Gatsas stated if we discontinue the street today, whose going to be able to utilize those.

Mr. Borek stated I am not certain of that answer at this moment, I think that some period of time would need to run its course before the discontinuance takes place, that was my understanding, but maybe Mr. Arnold could address that.

Chairman Garrity asked Deputy Solicitor Arnold what's the process for discontinuance, maybe you could just give us a time frame.

Deputy Solicitor Arnold replied with regard to the question on the use of the spaces, although you discontinue the street, you could still leave it open as it is now and the public could use those spaces till the City determined a different use. In terms of a discontinuance process, at this point it's usually sent to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to send the petition to a road hearing. A road hearing I believe has to have 21 days notice to abutters so at some point down the road when the road hearing is held the Board could then vote to discontinue or not discontinue.

Alderman Osborne asked right now it has how many spaces.

Mr. Borek responded I don't have that answer.

Alderman Osborne asked where's the money coming is there meters there now.

Mr. Borek replied there are meters there now.

Alderman Osborne stated and the money is coming through the City, why should we discontinue that.

Mr. Borek stated in this case to provide for space for valet parking that is needed by restaurants in the area and we would recommend or propose substituting valet parking or lease revenues with meter revenues.

Alderman Osborne stated we could still do this, make these parking spaces and still obtain the monies coming from them and they could take advantage of those spaces, so why do we have to discontinue it.

Mr. Borek replied that's a good question, I think the reason for the discontinuance was.

Deputy Solicitor Arnold stated as we have long said you can't lease particular spots to particular people on public streets, although the City certainly has a program where you can lease spaces in parking lots, you don't lease a particular space you lease a right to park in a space if it is available. If you discontinued the street since the City owns the land underneath this particular street, you could then turn it into parking or lease the parking out to a restaurant owner as Mr. Borek has stated at a stated price and lease those particular spaces.

Alderman Osborne asked how far away is the restaurant(s).

Mr. Borek replied the stadium is about 300 feet along Commercial south of the sidewalk.

Alderman Osborne stated who else would even want to use those spaces outside of what you are talking about, how full are they now is somebody from Traffic here, does anybody from Traffic know what these things are pulling in now or if anybody is parking there at all.

Mr. Borek stated we can find out, I believe the spaces may be used for visitors to the Fischer Cat Stadium now.

Alderman Duval stated just for a point of clarification Mr. Borek just so I understand this, the idea was contrived from what, could you just give me a nickel version of how this came about. I am just confused as to whether this was in response to a specific business' cry for help from the city to add parking so they could support their business plan or this come about as a request of the Fischer Cats, or how did this come about, because I know the Fischer Cats across the street has plenty of parking where the Starfish Grill is, they have their own parking there in front of their place.

Mr. Borek stated it originated from a request of the proposed developer of the retail space on the riverfront, within the riverfront project adjacent to the Fischer Cat Stadium, specifically Bob O'Sullivan, proposing to develop a restaurant in the Millyard.

Alderman Duval stated and they need parking spaces allocated so they can move forward with their plan to build the restaurant there cause they don't have sufficient parking under the present conditions.

Mr. Borek stated right.

Alderman Duval stated the owner of the Fischer Cats have they been part of this discussion as well.

Mr. Borek replied not yet. There may have been some discussions between the restaurant developer and neighbors including the Fischer Cats.

Alderman O'Neil stated I remember having a discussion a year, 18 months ago, with Mr. O'Sullivan about this issue, I was very surprised that the lending institutions were very cautious about loaning him any money based on the parking issue even though it is not a requirement, but I think that is in the zoning (CBD) there is no parking as part of the zoning but Mr. O'Sullivan said here is one of the bankers, call him. I called him and asked him and he said in fact they were concerned about the number of parking spaces, it surprised the heck out of me. This is the last piece of the riverfront development adjacent to vacant lot as you come into Fischer Cat stadium, somebody either the master developer or Mr. O'Sullivan is making a payment to the City now am I correct.

Mr. Borek replied that was correct.

Alderman O'Neil said so they want to see this move forward, and I know they looked at everything last year from parking up in the Canal Street garage, which ended up getting sold.

Mr. Borek stated I think that was probably too distant to work.

Alderman O'Neil stated I don't think those meters generate very much in revenue, never seen many cars down there.

Alderman O'Neil moved to recommend the petition be referred to a Road Hearing.

There was no second to the motion.

Chairman Garrity asked what the pleasure of the Committee was, perhaps table it until they got more information.

Alderman Osborne so moved to table this item until there was more information brought back. Alderman Duval duly seconded the motion. The motion carried with none recorded in opposition.

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman O'Neil stated there is an item in front of the Committee, the Police Department has been in communication with Alderman Osborne about turning a storage room at the Regis Lemaire Center on Maple Street a community policing office, they need approximately \$4,000. That was a budget number proposed by the Facilities Division of Highway to change out an outside door and do some minor improvements on the inside, I think the door was the biggest they had to put a new frame and a glass door, and it's a solid door now. I'm not sure there is a better location in the City of Manchester for a Community Police Station than on Maple Street across from the JFK, adjacent to Hunts Pool and the Skateboard park so I'd like to move on the \$4,000 request and hope we can send it to the full Board tonight.

Alderman O'Neil so moved to recommend approval of \$4,000 for costs associated with turning the storage room at the Regis Lemaire Center into a Community Policing Center. Alderman Osborne seconded the motion.

Chairman Garrity advised that funds could be made available from the South Willow Street re-roofing project and handouts were provided to the Clerk. There being no further discussion Chairman Garrity called for a vote. There being none opposed the motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Osborne, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee